DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 348 872 FL 020 564

AUTHOR Stansfield, Charles W.
TITLE Testing the Language Proficiency of Bilingual Teachers.
PUB DATE 1 Jun 79
NOTE 16p.; Paper presented at the National Invitational Conference on Implementing the Lau Task Force Remedies. Sponsored by the Coalition of India Controlled Boards.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Bilingual Education; *Bilingual Teachers; Comparative Analysis; Court Litigation; Elementary Secondary Education; Language Proficiency; *Language Tests; School Responsibility; *Spanish; *State Standards; *Teacher Certification; Testing; Test Selection
IDENTIFIERS *Colorado; Foreign Service Institute DC; *Oral Proficiency Testing

ABSTRACT

As bilingual education emerges after the 1974 Lau decision, the additional need to test the language proficiency of bilingual education teachers is recognized. Examination of possible means of validating language proficiency of bilingual education teacher certification candidates shows several alternatives, some desirable and some not. A review of these measures focuses on the state of Colorado and teacher competence in Spanish. Of five means for testing, the National Teachers' Examination in Spanish, easiest to administer, is least desirable because it measures receptive but not productive language skills and contains some items of questionable validity. The Modern Language Association Spanish Proficiency Test for Teachers and Advanced Students is less secure, more reliable, but still unsatisfactory for this purpose. A third possibility, construction of a new test, would be costly and time-consuming. A fourth option is to leave validation of teachers' proficiency to the universities, but variation in standards would result. The fifth and most highly recommended means is the Foreign Service Institute Oral Proficiency Interview, described in some detail here. It is proposed that Colorado use the test statewide for certification/endorsement of bilingual education teachers and adopt a state standard for proficiency. The experience of other states provides a basis for comparison. (MSE)

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Testing the Language Proficiency of Bilingual Teachers

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Paper presented at the National Invitational Conference on
Implementing the Lau Task Force Remedies

Sponsored by the
Coalition of Indian Controlled School Boards

Denver, Colorado
June 1, 1979

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Testing the Language Proficiency of Bilingual Teachers

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Introduction

The Lau decision of 1974 established that school districts must make a meaningful effort to teach the linguistically different child and the Lau Remedies established bilingual education as the means through which school districts should make this effort. As a result, at least 19 states now have Bilingual Education laws which provide for compulsory instruction in the non-English language while the child is acquiring English. Normally funding of these programs is provided by the state education agency and occasionally it is provided by the federal government under the provisions of Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

Bilingual education is often defined as "the teaching of a substantial part of the regular school curriculum in a non-English language." This definition implies that the teacher in the bilingual classroom will be proficient in a language other than English. Yet little attention has been directed to the relative bilingualism of so-called bilingual teachers. It is common to find monolingual teachers in the bilingual classroom. Depending on which part of the country one lives in, this monolingual teacher may speak either English or some other language. The diversity of language skills among bilingual teachers is tremendous to the extent that in Florida it is common to find monolingual Spanish speaking teachers. If the teacher does speak a second language this proficiency is often minimal so that the teaching of course content in the second language is impaired due to the inability of the teacher to communicate. In addition, when the teacher is not proficient in the second language nearly all instruction is carried out in the teacher's first language. As a result of a lack of proficiency in two languages on the part of the teacher many "bilingual education" programs are really monolingual programs with a FLES (Foreign Language in the Elementary School) component being held a few minutes each day. When this situation exists bilingual education as understood in the Lau Remedies can hardly take place.

While many state legislatures have recognized the need for bilingual education, fewer state education agencies or institutions of higher education have developed adequate standards for the certification of bilingual teachers. Fortunately, an increasing number of SEA's are recognizing the need for action in this area, but the gap between recognizing the problem and taking steps to correct it is large. While functional bilingualism is not the only skill needed by the bilingual teacher, it is in a very real sense the main skill which separates the bilingual teacher from the ordinary monolingual English speaking teacher. Because

of this there is a need to verify the bilingual teacher's bilingualism. This bilingualism should be real, not feigned, for when the latter occurs not only do students suffer, but the public image of bilingual education suffers as well.

An overview of the possible means of validating the language proficiency of bilingual education teacher certification applicants shows several alternatives, some desirable and some not so desirable. We shall review these alternatives focusing our attention on the state of Colorado where many bilingual education teachers are not proficient in Spanish.

Although in some states it may be necessary to formally validate the teacher or teacher certification applicant's (both of whom will henceforth be referred to as "the teacher") proficiency in two languages, in Colorado we propose that it is only necessary to validate proficiency in Spanish. This writer has yet to meet a Colorado elementary school teacher who is not functionally proficient in English, even when the teacher was born in another country and when English is the teacher's second language.

Possible Methods of Testing Spanish Proficiency

There are at least five means by which the teacher's Spanish language proficiency can be validated. The first and possible the least desirable of these is also the easiest to administrate. I am referring to the National Teachers Examination in Spanish (Muñoz, et al., 1978) which I coauthored. This test was designed for secondary school Spanish teachers and can be administered in two hours. It is a secure test which is offered several times per year at hundreds of test sites, principally universities, around the country at a cost of $13.00. The test consists of five sections: Listening comprehension, reading comprehension, grammar, culture of the Hispanic World, and applied Spanish linguistics, with subscores being reported for language, culture, and applied linguistics. Current national norms are available and these could be used to establish a cut off score. While adoption of this test would be a relatively simple matter, it is of questionable validity for the intended population of examinees. The test measures only receptive rather than productive language skills while the latter are of primary importance to the teacher's language usage in the classroom. Although some correlational validity with actual productive skills could certainly be established, this should not replace real construct validity, i.e., the measurement of speaking skills through a spoken language modality. The section on culture of the Hispanic world, while of some relevance to the bilingual teacher, does not focus on knowledge of the culture of Mexico and the Southwest, which is clearly of more direct importance. Finally, the inclusion of a section on applied Spanish linguistics when our concern is solely oral language proficiency is also of questionable validity. This is not to say that such knowledge is not useful to the teacher for in fact it is. However,

knowledge about the language should not replace real proficiency in the language, and this section of the test shows the lowest correlation with total score, even lower than the section on culture. Thus, as a test of spoken language proficiency the National Teacher's Examination: Spanish is not well suited to the needs of bilingual education in Colorado.

Another possible test is the Modern Language Association Spanish Proficiency Test for Teachers and Advanced Students. This test takes three and one half hours to administer. It is not entirely secure since it can be purchased by colleges and universities for internal use, which is the manner in which it is most often used today. The language portion of the test battery consists of four subsections: Listening, speaking, reading and writing. The listening, reading and writing sections are locally scored, while the speaking section is normally sent to Educational Testing Service for scoring by trained scorers. A common charge to examinees for this test is $20. Scores for each subtest are reported in terms of percentile rankings on national norms based on the scores of junior high and high school Spanish teachers. The reliability of the test if very high (.94) although the reliability of the speaking subtest is only about .83 (Kaulfers, 1965).

On inspection the MLA test appears to be a better measure of Spanish language proficiency than the NTE for several reasons First there is the inclusion of a direct speaking test into the battery. We consider this to be a necessity for a test whose scores will be used to make important decisions effecting people. Next, there is the fact that the MLA test also examines the other three communicative skills of listening, reading, and writing, and reports subscores on these. In this sense it can provide a diagnostic profile of the examinee's strengths and weaknesses in the language, and such information could be useful to examinees in improving their skills. However, the crux of language proficiency in the (K-3) bilingual classroom is the ability to express oneself orally, and studies of the test (Pacquette and Tollinger, 1968) have shown the speaking subtest to be the weaker portion of the instrument. Therefore, although in toto the MLA test can be considered to be a valid, reliable, and useful measure of Spanish language proficiency it is not entirely satisfactory for the purpose being considered here.

A third possibility is the construction of a new test, one which does not presently exist. Such an undertaking would involve substantial human and financial resources. The test development process would also involve considerable time as would post development studies on the test's reliability and validity. This should only be done if no suitable instrument is currently available.

Another administrative possibility would be to simply leave the task of validating the teacher's Spanish proficiency to the universities. Even if all universities were to take this matter seriously, a doubtful possibility, there would be considerable variation in the standards

developed, not to mention the reliability and validity of the methods used to measure attainment of these standards. Because of this, we consider this alternative to be unacceptable.

The FSI Exam

The fifth means of providing for functional proficiency in Spanish among bilingual education teachers is through the use of the Foreign Service Institute Oral Proficiency Interview. Because this is the means recommended here, an in-depth description of this test, which is generally unknown to Colorado bilingual educators, is included.

History: The history of the FSI Interview dates back to the Korean War, when the Civil Service Commission was directed under the National Mobilization and Manpower Act of 1952 to develop a register of government employees who had skills in various foreign languages. In accordance with standard government procedures, an interagency committee was established to develop criteria for rating the language skills of government employees, under the chairmanship of the Dean of the FSI Language School. Recognizing that the traditional labels of fair, good, fluent, and bilingual were completely inadequate descriptions of language skills, the committee set out to develop a system which would identify proficiency levels between "no knowledge" of a foreign language and "total mastery." With the end of the Korean War the project was shelved although much of the committee's work, such as the designation of six proficiency levels, remains apparent in the test today. The Foreign Service Institute, however, continued to work on the problem because of State Department directives which soon followed that officers shall demonstrate functional proficiency for work abroad in one of the languages of diplomacy (Spanish, French and German), as well as minimal proficiency for reading street signs, giving directions, etc., in the language of the post to which currently assigned. Since achievement in the language was to be verified through tests administered by the Foreign Service Institute, an independent testing unit within the agency was established in 1958 following completion of the rating scale. Since that time use of the FSI interview and scale has spread to all government agencies, including the armed forces, the Agency for International Development, the U.S. Information Agency, the Civil Service Commission, the Peace Corps, and NATO. (Sollenberger, 1978) It has also spread to universities and missionary training programs and it is now being adopted in bilingual education circles. It is impossible to say how many interviews have been given, but the number must certainly exceed 100,000. Its use continues to increase because of its unquestionable validity and because subsequent research has shown it to have very high reliability.

Test Administration: The "test" is simply a loosely structured oral conversation in the foreign language between two people, the examiner and the examinee. The interview may last only five minutes for people who obviously have no knowledge of the language or it may last up to one half hour for a person who is highly proficient. The

average interview lasts from 15 to 20 minutes. Although the examinee knows that he is being tested the interview itself is so similar to a natural conversation that nervousness is rarely a problem. Again, this is because the test does not seem like a test, but rather like a natural conversation.

The interview consists of at least two and sometimes three stages. During the first stage, known as the exploratory stage, the interviewer introduces himself to the examinee, greets him, and asks simple personal questions such as Como se llama usted?, De donde es?, Cuantos anos tiene?, Donde vive?, Tiene usted familia?, etc. These questions have a dual purpose, first to put the examinee at ease and second to give the examiner an idea of the general competence of the interviewee so that later questions can be pitched at an appropriate difficulty level. The exploratory stage usually lasts from two to four minutes.

The next stage, called the analytical stage, usually composes the rest of the interview. During this stage the interviewer asks questions which explore the examinee's strengths and weaknesses in the language. It is difficult to state exactly what questions will be asked since this depends on the answers of the interviewee and his level of overall competence. Obviously a person whose skills are at the survival level cannot be expected to discuss the Watergate affair or the causes of the gasoline shortage. On the other hand such a person might be asked what are his favorite foods, where he went to school, what sports he plays, what his parents do or did, etc. At the intermediate levels where the interviewee has conversational proficiency the interviewer might ask the teacher to describe his school, an unforgettable incident in the classroom, or even to tell why he believes in bilingual education. At this level a substantial part of the interview, although by no means all of it, is centered around the world of work, in order to ascertain to what extent the interviewee can use the language on the job.

The third stage of the interview is optional and is used only when two examiners are available. During this stage, called the situational stage, one of the interviewers pretends that he can speak only English and the other interviewer pretends that he can speak only the test language. The interviewee is then asked to serve as interpreter for a conversation between the two. At the lower level the situation might involve obtaining a hotel room, while at the higher levels it could involve having a car repaired, discussing the rental of a house, etc.

During the interview, the examiner will try to gradually increase the difficulty level of the conversation until it becomes difficult for the testee to readily communicate or until flaws in his language proficiency appear. Once this occurs the interviewer, satisfied that he has sufficiently challenged the examinee, will reduce the difficulty level of the conversation. When the interviewer is satisfied that he has explored and can correctly rate the testee's proficiency, he will politely bring the conversation to an end, often making a favorable comment about the examinee's skills in the foreign language.

The Rating Scale:

The FSI Interview is a criterion-referenced proficiency test. That is to say that scores are not simply numbers but have equivalents in terms of communicative proficiency in real life situations. The scores are reported on a scale ranging from 0 to 5 with each level being defined as follows. (A description of the normal speech style of persons at each level in included in Appendix A. The reader is also encouraged to refer to these).

Level 0 - Unable to function in the language.
Level 1 - Able to satisfy routine travel needs and minimum courtesy requirements.
Level 2 - Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements.
Level 3 - Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and professional topics.
Level 4 - Able to use the language fluently and accurately on all levels normally pertinent to professional needs.
Level 5 - Speaking proficiency equivalent to that of an educated native speaker.

Except for level 5 a "plus" value may be added to each of the above levels. This means that the testee substantially exceeds the requirements for a specific level and fulfills most but not all the requirements of the next highest level. The use of the plus rating produces a range of eleven possible proficiency ratings, six of which are criterion referenced so that the examinee or any employer can refer to the description of the rating to determine the level of performance indicated.

Rating Criteria:

While conducting the interview, the interviewer makes brief mental or actual notes of the examinee's skills in five areas: pronunciation, grammatical accuracy, vocabulary, fluency, and listening comprehension. Of these criteria, pronunciation is assigned least weight while grammar and vocabulary are assigned the greatest weight. This is because accent, except at the very low levels, does not effect communication ability, while performance with the syntax and vocabulary of the language will greatly effect overall espressiveness. Because of this the interviewer will try to explore several areas of vocabulary, as well as more advanced grammmatical structures such has the subjuntive, compound tenses, etc. This is easily done by asking questions like,"What would you have done if you hadn't become a teacher?" Although the interviewer does not assign a score on each of these criteria, he does utilize them to explore and analyze the examinne's performance.

Validity and Reliability of the Interview: No description of a test would be complete without a discussion of these important con-

concepts. The validity of the test is evident throughout. It tests the speaking skill by having the examinee participate in a face-to face interview. Because the interviewer discusses several different topics, the interview is also content valid. Construct validity is also assured by consideration of the five rating criteria, all of which are called into play during the conversation. Indeed, whatever psycho-linguistic precesses are involved in real conversation are brought into play during the interview also.

Numerous in house reliability studies on the interview have been conducted over the years. All of these have shown that reliability among raters is very high. The author is aware of one study of raters at the Language Training Mission of the Mormon Church (Woodford,1976) which produced a coefficient of .99.

Clark (1975) reports on a study done at Educational Testing Service which trains oral interviewers for the Peace Corps. In this study two independent interviewers listened to eighty taped interviews and assigned a rating to each examinee. The results showed agreement in 95% of the cases. Adams (1978) reports on an even more extensive study done at the Foreign Service Institute. Here 18 examiners, six in Spanish, French, and German, each listened to 50 taped interviews in each language for a total of 150 tapes and 900 ratings. There was agreement across the eleven possible rankings at the .91 level.

Clifford (1978) reports on a study involving 48 undergraduate German majors at the University of Minnesota. Each was examined twice with each interview being scored according to the FSI criteria by four native speakers of German, The inter-rater reliability was .93 and test-retest reliablilty was .89. These results inidicate that the average reliability of the oral proficiency interview is at least as high as the reliability of objective paper-and-pencil tests of language skills, and it is much more valid. In fact, as Clark (1975) has pointed out, except for some unfeasible technique such as observing the examinee in a variety of real life settings-such as ordering meals, talking with friends,communicating on the job and so forth - it is difficult to imagine an oral proficiency measure with a higher level of validity.

A proposal for Colorado:

We propose that the FSI Oral Proficiency Interview be used statewide in Colorado for the certification or endorsement of bilingual education teachers. In the near future it is probable that certification requirements in this area will be adopted. These will undoubtedly call for the teaching of subjects and courses in bilingual teacher education programs. Fulfillment of such requirements can easily be verified by checking student transcripts and the curricula of the various institutions of higher education. The criteria will probably also include a statement to the effect that teachers should possess some degree of bilingualism. If this standard is to be enforced then

the extent of the bilingualism must be clearly indentified and a means of validating it among applicant must also be established. We shall therefore, consider how this might be done.

As pointed out by Livingston (1978) any meaningful standard is simply an answer to the question "How good is good enough?" In the context of bilingual education, this question can be objectively answered through a simple research design. If we were to request that a group of persons competent to judge a teachers ability to teach in Spanish in the bilingual classroom listen to a series of taped interviews and rate each speakers proficiency as acceptable or unacceptable, we could compare these subjective ratings with the speakers validated proficiency level. This comparison would yield the minimum language proficiency language rating that is necessary to function well in the bilingual classroom. The judges used could be bilingual program directors, teacher trainers, or other persons whose past experience would qualify them to make such a judgement.

The state of New Jersey, with the assistance of Educational Testing Service, carried out a similar study in 1976. There eleven judges, all experienced bilingual education teachers, listened to five minute segments of twenty taped Spanish interviews and rated each as acceptable or unacceptable. (Livingston, 1978) The results showed that FSI level four proficiency was found acceptable 77% of the time by the raters. Therefore, this level of proficiency was adapted by the New Jersey Department of Education as the minimum acceptable Spanish proficiency for the Spanish-English bilingual certificate.

Administering the program: Administration of a language proficiency testing program could be carried out by establishing several testing centers where the applicant for a credential could appear for the interview. These centers should be located in different population centers around the state and at all state universities. Whenever an applicant wished to take the test he would simply contact the nearest examiner based on a list of examiners provided by the state Department of Education. The interview would be conducted by a trained interviewer, most probably a university professor, bilingual program director, or Spanish teacher, who would be paid a nominal fee for each interview conducted. In order to avoid any partiality in the rating process, as could occur if an interviewer were rating a close friend, each interview would be tape recorded and then sent to a central receiving location where the examinee's performance would be rated. Such a system would not only eliminate any interviewer bias, but would also eliminate any lack of consistency between raters since all tapes would be scored by the same rater.

The cost of such a program would be borne by the credential applicants. A fee of $25 could be charged each applicant which would be used to pay for the cost of the interview, the rating, postage, printing, supplies, bookkeping, and clerical services. The program pro-

posed here would be financially self-sufficient. Since all program personnel would be part-time employess, facilities for testing would be provided gratuitously by the school districts or universities where they were regularly employed. Interviewers could be trained and certified at minimal charge by Educationl Testing Service in a two day oral interviewer certification workshop which would be held in Denver.

Incorporating the Standard into Certification Requirements: The establishment of a minimal proficiency rating will pose a threat to many already teaching in bilingual classroom. Therefore, any certification standards should allow the already employed teacher, as well as school districts and teacher training institutions a grace period of two or three years to comply with these standards. If after the expiration of the grace period, an already employed teacher still has not met the standards, a provisional certificate could be awarded provided the individual is persuing a course of study designed to help him meet the standards. Eventually however, when a shortage of certified bilingual teachers no longer exists districts should not be allowed to employ non-certified personnel, or only a minimal percentage of these, according to state requirements.

Use of the Interview in Other States.

According to Clark (1979), the FSI has been adopted for bilingual certification purposes in the states of New Jersey, Massachussetts, and Texas, and it is being considered in Florida, New York, and Illinois. In New Jersey, where it has been used longest, over 2300 interview examinations had been given as of April, 1979. (Brown, 1979). Interestingly, the interview and other certification standards have been the subject of two court suits in New Jersey. The first of these filed by two teacher (Jose and Manny De Para versus F.G. Burke, Commissioner of Education, 1977), alledged that requiring language proficiency only of bilingual education teachers was arbitrary and discriminatory. The plaintiffs assertion was rejected in state court, and this decision was upheld when appealed to the New Jersey Supreme Court. The second suit (New Jersey Education Association versus F.G. Burke, Commissioner of Education,1978) challenged the requirement that presently employed bilingual education teachers comply with the certification regulations. In this case both the state and federal courts found the regulations to be valid since no prior regulations existed. These court rulings have strengthened confidence in the regulations in that state and have shown that the FSI Interview can withstand critical inspection by the courts.

Texas is another state that has recently adopted the FSI exam and has set up a well organized management system to administer it. Originally a teacher's bilingualism need only be confirmed by a school principal and a member of the community. A letter was then sent to the district superintendent who in turn sent the statements along with a request for bilingual certification to the Texas Education Agency

which in turn issued the endorsement. According to Ernesto Zamora(1979) of the TEA bilingual education unit some 6800 teachers have been certified through this process since 1974, even though many of them were not comfortable using Spanish in the classroom. Because of the lack of quality control which this situation produced, the TEA last year opted to adopt the FSI Oral Interview instead. After receiving funds for the project from Title VII, the TEA contracted with Educational Testing Service to set up and administer the program initally. In November, 1978, 100 Spanish interviewers from colleges and universities throughout the state were trained in a one day training session. Fifteen raters from the states several regional educational service centers were also trained and eight of these were assigned the duty of rating interviews as part of their job responsibilities. When an applicant wishes to take the interview he simply arranges to do so with the closest interviewer at an institution of higher education. A tape recording of the interview is then sent to the ETS regional office in Austin which in turn sends it to one of the service centers to be rated. In this manner, neither the examinee nor the interviewer knows who is doing the rating, and the rater does not know the name or location of the person whose performance is being rated. ETS then communicates the score to the TEA and the individual. ETS provides recalibration training for the interviewers every two years and for the raters every year. Interviewers must themselves show at least level 4 proficiency so that they will be capable of conversing on a wide range of topics.

Texas requires a level 3 score on the Interview for certification. If an examinee receives a 2+, his tape is automatically scored by a second rater. If these two scores are not in agreement, the tape is sent to a master rater. If the examinee is not in agreement with the score he receives, the TEA can ask that it be rescored by another rater or even sent to Princeton for scoring. All applicants are permitted to take their first interview free of charge. However the cost of additional interviews must be assumed by the applicant. All tapes are kept on file for 30 days following notification of score to the applicant.

The state of Massachusetts, which was the first to pass a bilingual education law in 1971, was also the first to adopt the FSI interview in 1972. Since that time approximately 3,000 interviews have been given at college campuses around the state (Mazzone,1979). A fee of $25 is charged for the interview and the applicant must demonstrate least level four proficiency in the non-English language. However a distinct weakness of the Massachusetts program is the fact that there is no quality control over the testing procedure. Interviewers do not receive formal training in interviewing and rating techniques. Instead they train each other and learn from on the job experience. Basically, they are only provided with a description of each proficiency level.

This paper has attempted to review the options for the validation of language proficiency among bilingual teachers. After examining the alternatives we must conclude that the FSI Oral Proficiency Interview is the most valid test of spoken language proficiency yet produced. By providing training the examiners and performance descriptions of each level, it can be made as reliable as most standardized objective paper-and-pencil tests. Its format and rating scale can be applied to all languages and its scores are widely understood in academia and in government agencies at home and abroad. As educators set standards and begin to assess language proficiency among teachers, the controlled use of this test should be given thoughtful consideration.

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APPENDIX A

LEVEL O
Unable to function in the language
Verbal production limited to occasional isolated words; little or no comprehesion of even the most simplified and slowed speech; essentially no funtional communication in the course of the interview.

LEVEL 1
Able to satisfy routine travel needs and minimum courtesy requirements
Can ask and answer questions on highly familiar topics; within the scope of a very limited language experience, can understand simple questions and statements, allowing for slowed speech, repitition, or paraphase, speaking vocabulary inadequate to express anything but the most elementary needs; errors in pronunciation and grammar are frequent, but can be understood by a native speaker used to dealing with foreigners attempting to speak the language. While elementary needs vary considerably from individual to individual, any person at Level 1 should be able to handle formulas of politeness, order a meal, ask for shelter or lodging, ask for and give simple directions, make purchases, and tell time.

LEVEL 2
Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements.
Can handle with confidence but not with facility most situations; including introductions and casual converstations about current events, and can deal with work, family, and autobiographical information; language competence sufficient to handle limited work requirements, not involving linguisitic complications or difficultied; can get the gist of most conversations on subjects requiring no specilized knowledge; has a speaking vocabulary sufficient to communicate simply with some circumlocation; accent, though often quite faulty, is intelligible; can usually handle elementary constructions accurately but does not have thorough or confident control of the grammar.

LEVEL 3
Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and professional topics
Can discuss particular interests and special fields of competence with reasonable ease; comprehension is quite complete for normal rate of speech; vocabulary is broad enough that it is rarely necessary to grope for a word; accent may be obviously foreign; control of grammar good; errors virtually never interfere with understanding.

LEVEL 4
Able to use the language fluently and accurately on all levels normally pertinent to professional needs.
Can understand and participate in any conversation within the range of his or her experience with a high degree of fluency and precision of vocabulary; would rarely be taken for a native speaker but can respond appropriately even in unfamiliar situations; errors of pronunciation and grammar quite rare.

LEVEL 5
Speaking proficiency equivalent to that of an education native speaker
Has complete fluency in the language such that his or her speech is fully accepted by educated native speakers as native in all of its aspects, including breadth of vocabulary and idiom, colloquialisms, and pertinent cultural references.